

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 6/24/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S371C110040)

Reader #1: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	31.5
Sub Total	37	31.5
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	20.5
Sub Total	28	20.5
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	11.5
Sub Total	15	11.5
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	8
Sub Total	20	8
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	4.5
Sub Total	5	4.5
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	76.0

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - SRCL - 7: 84.371C

Reader #1: *****

Applicant: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S371C110040)

Questions

Quality of State-level activities - Quality of State-level activities

1. In determining the quality of State-level activities, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 31.5

Sub Question

1. How the SEA will carry out the required State-level activities (described in the Additional Requirements section of the NIA) and how it will align those activities with its comprehensive State literacy plan.

Strengths:

The applicant outlines numerous steps already taken in the development of a comprehensive literacy plan and what actions will be taken in response to SRCL funding. The proposal also addresses the creation of a state Rtl center, an investment of data collection and analysis tools, a strengthening of academic standards as they relate to literacy, instructional support for ALL students, the fostering of professional learning communities, and defined leadership roles in the area of literacy (p. 11-21, 23-25). The actions taken and proposed meet the additional requirements of the SRCL and will serve to build a strong, comprehensive and research-based literacy program. The reviewer believes these steps will serve to provide high-quality data and professional support to educators and thereby improve student literacy outcomes.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 10

2. The SEA's goals for improving student literacy outcomes throughout the State for all students (e.g., limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities), including a description of the data (which may include data gathered through a needs assessment) that the SEA has considered or will consider and a clear and credible path that the SEA will take to achieve these goals with the support of its LEAs.

Strengths:

The analysis of NAEP and other assessment data were used to convincingly demonstrate the needs of students in the SEA (p. 5-10). The applicant has provided a clear set of goals for improving literacy and delineates what actions will be taken by the SEA to address these goals at each academic level. These actions represent a clear and credible path to improved literacy outcomes for the students served (p. 26-29).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not propose to conduct a needs assessment for subgrantees, nor is there a requirement noted that subgrantees complete one themselves. A more localized needs assessment may be more useful in determining the extent and nature of services needed. (p.31)

Reader's Score: 7.5

- 3. How the SEA will provide technical assistance and support to its SRCL subgrantees (and, at its discretion, to other LEAs or early childhood education providers) to enable them to implement a high-quality comprehensive literacy program and to improve student achievement in core academic subjects.**

Strengths:

Applicant notes that technical assistance will be provided in the form of professional development (i.e., webinars and district, regional, and state meetings) and on-site reviews to subgrantees (p. 30). The professional development proposed is based on research-based, literacy instructional practices for all students (including those who are categorized as limited-English-proficient and with disabilities, p. 26-28). It appears that multiple formats and exposures to the training in best practices will be provided. Such professional development will service to prepare educators to implement best instructional practices.

Weaknesses:

Additional detail regarding the nature of technical assistance to be provided is needed. Little detail regarding specifics of the schedule or personnel is made available (p. 30). The provision of additional detail would afford this reviewer the opportunity to make a judgment regarding whether the intensity of the support/professional development provided was likely to have a substantial impact on classroom practice.

Reader's Score: 4

- 4. How the SEA will evaluate the State's progress in improving achievement in literacy for children and youth from birth through grade 12, including disadvantaged students, including: (1) whether the evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluator (whose role in the project is limited solely to conducting the evaluation); (2) whether the evaluation will use methods that are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the objectives of the proposed project; and (3) how the SEA will use evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities.**

Strengths:

The applicant notes that an independent evaluator will evaluate the literacy performance of students through formative and summative assessments; as well as the impact of program on teaching practices through school and classroom observations (p. 45). The SEA also will evaluate progress in improving achievement through the analysis of state and NAEP data. The collection of on-site data and the development of a data warehouse are also used to evaluate performance and make adjustments to proposed activities. (p.30) These levels of evaluation will provide sufficient information to SEA, LEAs, and individual educators to inform and enhance their practices, demonstrating methods that are appropriate, thorough, and feasible to meeting the applicants proposed objectives.

Weaknesses:

Additional detail regarding the role of the independent evaluator in assessing secondary student performance is needed (p. 45). A clearer delineation of how the activities developed in response to the SRCL proposal extend the actions already enacted by the SEA to improve literacy outcomes for students is needed (p. 30).

Reader's Score: 7.5

Sub Question

- 5. How the SEA will disseminate information on project outcomes, disaggregated by student subgroup, and in formats that are easily understood by, and accessible to, the public, and how the SEA will make that information useful to varied groups (such as families, educators, researchers, other experts, early childhood education providers, and State leaders).**

Strengths:

Aggregate and disaggregated data will be posted on the web. The applicant also notes the provision of evaluation reports on project outcomes to the public on website dedicated to the sharing of tools and resources developed in support of the SRCLP grant (p. 31). The provision of this information to the public will allow the potential for the impact of the SEA and LEA proposed activities to extend beyond the selected subgrantees to other LEAs, and allow other interested parties access to information regarding these activities.

Weaknesses:

The applicant does not make it apparent that the data provided to the public will be in a state that is easily understood by all stakeholders. (p. 31)

Reader's Score: 2.5

Quality of the State subgrant competition - Quality of the State subgrant competition

- 1. In determining the quality of the applicant's proposed SRCL subgrant competition, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria**

Reader's Score: 20.5

Sub Question

- 1. The extent to which the SEA will run a rigorous, high-quality competition for subgrants, including how it will review and judge:**
a) The LEA's or early childhood education provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal.

Strengths:

The applicant describes a rigorous application process. Subgrantees are required to submit information which should allow for the effective judgment of LEAs capacity to implement proposal. (p. 32)

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 3

- 2. (b) The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant has proposed a comprehensive high-quality literacy program that meets all of the requirements set out in paragraph (d) of the Additional Requirements section in the NIA and that:**
(1) Addresses the needs of disadvantaged students and proposes to implement activities in schools and early learning programs with the highest levels of need and capacity for improvement.
(2) Is informed by a needs assessment described in the application and is designed to support effective teaching and to improve student achievement of struggling readers.
(3) Involves other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged

Sub Question

students.

Strengths:

The applicant requires potential subgrantees be members of LEAs, early childhood programs, or community organizations (e.g., public libraries) eligible for Title 1, thereby targeting those students at-risk due to poverty.

Subgrantees are required to present a high-quality literacy program that aligned with the additional requirements designated by SRCL and state standards (p. 32-34) increasing the chances they will implement procedures that will have a positive impact on student literacy outcomes.

LEAs are also required to form partnerships with schools and community agencies, as to expand the impact of the proposed activities. (p. 33)

Weaknesses:

The SEA does not designate a needs assessment as a requirement for subgrantee's proposal. A localized needs assessment may be useful in determining the extent and nature of services needed for specific LEAs.

Reader's Score: 5.5

- 3. (c) The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant demonstrates that it will implement a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction that aligns activities under the SRCL subgrant with literacy instruction supported with other Federal funds, including with funds the entity receives under Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the ESEA and, as appropriate, the Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and State and local funds.**

Strengths:

The applicant requires LEAs present a high-quality literacy program and address how the SRCL subgrant funds will align with other state and federally funded improvement efforts (e.g., IDEA, Title 1 and Perkins) (p. 34, 49).

Requiring subgrantee to explicitly state how funds from various programs will be integrated encourages LEAs to be thoughtful and explicit about the use of resources and affords SEA evaluation of program coordination, efficiency and effectiveness.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 2

- 4. The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education that propose to serve high-poverty schools or a high-poverty population, based on a definition of poverty and process for applying the priority provided by the State.**

Strengths:

The applicant targets LEAs with high percentages of high-poverty students in that potential subgrantees are required to be Title 1 eligible. Subgrantees are required to provided explanations for participant selection, demographic and literacy achievement data of targeted population, and current literacy programming (p. 32). The provision of this information will allow the SEA to assign priority to those most at risk.

Weaknesses:

None

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 6

- 5. The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education whose applications are supported by the strongest available evidence.**

Strengths:

The applicant states only those applications proposing evidence-based literacy programs will be considered. The proposal sets clear requirements (e.g., the use of research-based reading instruction as defined by the National Reading Panel, balanced assessment plans, specific supports for students with LEP and disabilities) for subgrantees to develop literacy plans with strongest evidence (p. 34). The provision of detailed requirements sets clear guides and expectations for the LEAs proposals; increasing the likelihood that LEAs will develop strong, comprehensive, and evidence-based literacy programs.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 4

- 6. The extent to which the SEA will develop or update a process, or use an existing process, to review and judge the evidence base and alignment with State standards for the curricula and materials that LEAs propose to use in implementing their subgrants, and how the SEA will make the process and results of any such review publicly available.**

Strengths:

Not Addressed

Weaknesses:

Methods used to evaluate curriculum applied and its alignment with state standards are not addressed, nor is the dissemination of such data. (p. 46)

Reader's Score: 0

Project management - Project management

- 1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the quality of the project management plan: See Sub-Criteria**

Reader's Score: 11.5

Sub Question

- 1. (i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

Strengths:

The applicant provides a clear plan for monitoring the progress of LEAs awarded the SRCL funds. A clear timeline is specified for LEA task completion (p. 39-48). The explicatedness of the plan of essential activities should allow for a smoother implementation and evaluation of proposal.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

The proposed budget only addresses one year of programming. SEAs role in essential activities is not clearly specified. (p. 39, budget narrative)

Reader's Score: 4

2. (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key personnel.

Strengths:

Key personnel appear to be well trained and experienced educational leaders. (Appendix) The applicant provides the resumes of key personnel which reflect years of experience in literacy education and educational leadership.

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 5

3. (iii) The extent to which the State will ensure a diversity of perspectives in the design and implementation of the proposed project, including those of: families, teachers, early childhood education professionals, officials from other State and local agencies, Head Start Advisory Councils, professional organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and libraries.

Strengths:

The proposed advisory board is comprised of members from a variety of organizations/agencies representing a diverse set of interests (p. 49). This reviewed is convinced that diverse perspectives will be represented.

Weaknesses:

It is unclear that the perspectives of families and community agencies will be voiced in the design and implementation of the proposed projects (p.49).

Reader's Score: 2.5

Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources

1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 8

Sub Question

1. (i) The extent to which the costs described in the SEA's budget are reasonable in relation to the number of objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project .

Sub Question

Strengths:

Overall the applicant presents what appears to be a reasonable budget to meet proposed goals and objectives (budget narrative)

Weaknesses:

Proposed budget only addresses one year of the program. The allocation of \$500,000 for one year of external evaluation seems excessive. (budget narrative)

Reader's Score: 6

2. (ii) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that SRCL subgrant funds are allocated as follows:
- * At least 15 percent to serve children from birth through age five.
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in kindergarten through grade five.
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in middle and high school, through grade 12, including an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools.

Strengths:

Not addressed.

Weaknesses:

Not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

3. (iii) The extent to which the SEA will use the grant to leverage other State and Federal funds in order to maximize the impact of the grant and how it will support LEAs and early childhood education providers in integrating funds with other local, State, and Federal funds and in developing a plan for sustaining funding after the end of the subgrant.

Strengths:

Not addressed.

Weaknesses:

Not addressed.

Reader's Score: 0

4. (iv) The extent to which the SEA will award SRCL subgrants of sufficient size to support projects that improve instruction for a significant number of students in the high-need schools or early learning programs serving children birth through five that the SRCL subgrantee would serve.

Strengths:

The applicant proposes to provide subgrants of sufficient size. The applicant notes awards will be based on the size and need of the district and range from \$500,000 to \$3 million (p. 1).

Weaknesses:

Additional detail regarding the dissemination of funds is needed. Little information is provided regarding what criteria/procedure will be used determining appropriate allocation. The adequacy of awards should be addressed in the grant narrative. (p.1)

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must (1) propose to use technology--which may include technology to support principles of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA)--to address student learning challenges; and (2) provide, in its application, an evidence-based (as defined in the NIA) rationale that its proposed technology program, practice, or strategy will increase student engagement and achievement or increase teacher effectiveness.

Background: The effective use of technology is a critical tool for improving learning outcomes and providing teachers with high-quality professional development. Use of concepts, ideas, programming techniques, and computer-assisted text displays that give access to the text for students who cannot access traditional print, including limited-English-proficient children and students with disabilities, is a basic tenet of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA) and can help improve students' literacy and language development and identify and address student learning challenges.

Strengths:

The applicant demonstrates a clear commitment to the use of technology to enhance literacy learning through actions such as the adoption of Model Academic Standards for Information Technology Literacy and the creation of measures to assess students and teachers use of educational technology. (p. 18-19) These steps enhance the likelihood that technology will be used to enhance the learning opportunities for the students served.

Weaknesses:

A specific plan for the use of technology in supporting universal design is not provided.

Reader's Score: 4.5

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

1. To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to improve school readiness and success through grade 12 in the area of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students.

Background: Improving the language and literacy development of disadvantaged students is essential to improving academic achievement for these students in all content areas. The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show disproportionately large numbers of disadvantaged students struggle with developing the necessary pre-literacy and literacy skills needed to read, comprehend, and use language effectively. This results in persistent gaps in academic achievement through the elementary and secondary school years and in high school graduation rates, and presents civic and economic difficulties for these students later in life. Meeting the language and literacy needs of disadvantaged students, including limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities, is a particular focus of the SRCL program.

Strengths:

The applicant has MET this priority. The proposal provides a clear list of activities it will undertake and expectations for LEAs to incorporate towards the development of a comprehensive literacy program. (p. 26-29)

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 0

Absolute Priority 2 - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making

1. To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to collect, analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, especially on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in the NIA), to improve instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in early learning settings and in elementary and secondary schools.

Background: Accurate, timely, relevant, and appropriate data, and the effective use of that data for informed decision-making, are essential to the continuous improvement of children's literacy and language development. In developing comprehensive literacy plans and programs, it is important for States to consider strategies that provide educators, as well as families and other key stakeholders, with the data they need and the capacity and training to use those data to improve school readiness, respond to the learning and academic needs of students, improve educator effectiveness, inform professional development practices and approaches, and make informed decisions that increase student pre-literacy, literacy, and language development.

Strengths:

This priority is MET. The SEA displays a strong initiative in support of data based decision making through investments in data collection and analysis tools. (p. 17, 29)

Weaknesses:

None

Reader's Score: 0

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Applicant: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S371C110040)

Reader #2: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	27
Sub Total	37	27
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	15
Sub Total	28	15
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	12
Sub Total	15	12
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	6
Sub Total	20	6
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	4.5
Sub Total	5	4.5
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	64.5

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - SRCL - 7: 84.371C

Reader #2: *****

Applicant: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S371C110040)

Questions

Quality of State-level activities - Quality of State-level activities

1. In determining the quality of State-level activities, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 27

Sub Question

1. How the SEA will carry out the required State-level activities (described in the Additional Requirements section of the NIA) and how it will align those activities with its comprehensive State literacy plan.

Strengths:

Strengths

A(i)

1. The SEA will create and implement state-level activities, such as a birth through grade 12 comprehensive literacy plan, that will focus on effective reading and writing instruction. (p. e3)
2. The state will update its comprehensive literacy plan to consist of three goals:
 - a. Ensure Wisconsin's children are proficient or on track to proficiency in reading and writing.
 - b. Make Wisconsin one of the top five states in NAEP reading achievement.
 - c. Cut the NAEP achievement gap in half in five years. (pp. e4-e6)
3. A transition plan will be developed in order to support early childhood and elementary-level educators' knowledge of RtI, data-based decision making, and improving learning outcomes from birth to grade 8. (p. e3)
4. Opportunities will be made available to assist educators in integrating technology to create products and analyze student work. (p. e3)
5. An Adolescent Literacy Task Force and High School Task Force exists to develop methods for ensuring that students at these respective grade levels improve reading and writing skills. (pp. e11-e12)
6. Wisconsin funds "4K" (Prekindergarten) programs through a primary state aid formula. This demonstrates that the state has an existing academic program for four-year-old children. (p. e14)
7. Wisconsin has established "community approaches" to implementing "4K" (Prekindergarten) programs which includes housing programs in Head Start centers and child care centers throughout the state. (p. e14)
8. The Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners network is comprised of over 40 community agencies and state government and creates "comprehensive early childhood services for every child and family who wants them." (p. e15)
9. Wisconsin has established the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS), YoungStar (a rating system for child care providers), and the Governor's State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (ECAC) (an agency responsible for assessing the quality and availability of early childhood education and high-quality early childhood education for low-income children). This demonstrates that the state has existing agencies that focus on the nature and needs of young children. (p. e15)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(i)

1. The SEA should list a few of the updates that will be made to the state literacy plan that align to the three goals that have been established. (p. e24) (Points were not deducted because the criteria for this section was met, and this statement is a suggestion.)
2. The goals for improving literacy achievement should be SMART - specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely. Evidence supporting these categories was not present; however, in this reviewer's opinion, the strengths of this category outweigh the weaknesses described. (p. e25)

Reader's Score: 9

2. **The SEA's goals for improving student literacy outcomes throughout the State for all students (e.g., limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities), including a description of the data (which may include data gathered through a needs assessment) that the SEA has considered or will consider and a clear and credible path that the SEA will take to achieve these goals with the support of its LEAs.**

Strengths:

Strengths

A(ii)

1. Data from the WSAS (grades 4, 8, 10) and NAEP (grades 4 and 8) in reading were presented. (pp. e5-e6)
2. Projected student performance scores on the WSAS and NAEP were presented indicating the desired results. (pp. e5-e6)
3. Table 2 displayed the performance of data of black students, economically disadvantaged students, and student with disabilities (SWDs) as compared that to that of their peers who were white, not economically disadvantaged, and without disabilities, respectively. (p. e6)
4. The SEA recognizes that student performance is declining on core content area assessments according to the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations (WKCE). (p. e7)
5. The SEA has presented ACT score results for African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian-American/Pacific Islander, and Hispanic students that suggests that the majority of these ethnic minorities were not college-ready. (p. e9)
6. Since the SEA asserts that the majority of the students who drop out of high school can neither read nor write, the state is targeting this population to improve literacy skills. (p. e9)
7. Statistical data for groups of students most likely to drop out of school was outlined. This data included disadvantaged students as well as students who have behavioral challenges and are expelled. (p. e10)
8. Wisconsin has established a clear and credible path to achieve the three literacy goals that have been outlined in the proposal. (pp. e4-e10)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(ii)

1. The application states that 82% of students are proficient on the Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS); however, the grade levels are not identified (p. e4)
2. The disaggregated data did not display performance information for any other ethnic minority other than blacks (p. e6); however, the narrative states that gaps in reading exist between "students of color" and white students. (p. e7)
3. "For eighth-graders, the overall score was above the national average and disaggregated groups were mixed" (p. e8). The term "mixed" should be quantified.
4. The SEA used data from 2008-2009 to report the dropout data for the state. Data from 2009-2010 would have been more current. (p. e10)
5. The percentages provided for dropouts do not add up to 100% - "about 60% came from 10 districts;

Sub Question

and approximately 50% came from one school district." (p. e10)

Reader's Score: 6

- 3. How the SEA will provide technical assistance and support to its SRCL subgrantees (and, at its discretion, to other LEAs or early childhood education providers) to enable them to implement a high-quality comprehensive literacy program and to improve student achievement in core academic subjects.**

Strengths:

Strengths

A(iii)

1. Technical assistance will be provided to LEAs and early childhood providers through face-to-face and virtual professional learning activities centered on technology use and effective literacy instruction. These methods of delivery offer a variety of methods for LEAs to receive assistance. (p. e30)
2. WDPI will monitor the implementation of the Comprehensive Literacy Plan through site visits. Site visits will allow the LEAs to receive feedback on program effectiveness based on observations. (p. e30)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(iii)

1. Persons/groups responsible for technical assistance were not specified.
2. Neither a proposed timeline nor the amount of technical support available were provided. Specifying how much technical support will be offered and the duration of this assistance would have been beneficial.

Reader's Score: 3

- 4. How the SEA will evaluate the State's progress in improving achievement in literacy for children and youth from birth through grade 12, including disadvantaged students, including: (1) whether the evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluator (whose role in the project is limited solely to conducting the evaluation); (2) whether the evaluation will use methods that are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the objectives of the proposed project; and (3) how the SEA will use evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities.**

Strengths:

Strengths

A(iv)

1. The SEA will enlist the services of the Rtl Center and Cooperative Educational Services Agency (CESA) Network to evaluate the effectiveness of plan implementation and will maintain "transparency in all aspects of the work." (pp. e30-e31)
2. Evaluation results will include the performance of disadvantaged students. (p. e30)
3. The WDPI will hire an independent evaluator to assess the effectiveness of literacy implementation at LEAs and early childhood centers using a battery of literacy assessments. The independent evaluator's results will be used in conjunction with the results from internal evaluations. (p. e45)
4. LEAs will be required to submit annual data reports to the SEA as a progress monitoring tool. (p. e46)
5. Progress will be monitored by a project management team. (p. e46)

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(iv)

1. It is not clear whether or not CESA is a state agency or an outside company; therefore, this reviewer could not determine whether or not CESA was an independent evaluator. (p. e18)
2. The applicant did not specifically state how the SEA would use evidence to improve the design and implementation of the activities for students from birth to grade 12.

Reader's Score: 7

- 5. How the SEA will disseminate information on project outcomes, disaggregated by student subgroup, and in formats that are easily understood by, and accessible to, the public, and how the SEA will make that information useful to varied groups (such as families, educators, researchers, other experts, early childhood education providers, and State leaders).**

Strengths:

Strengths

A(v)

1. The WDPI will provide aggregated and disaggregated data on-line. (p. e31)
2. The WDPI will have a user-friendly "data dashboard" that will provide real-time access to student information that includes assessment data for educators.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

A(v)

1. The SEA did not specify which methods they intend to use in order to make the project outcomes publicly available. The applicant states, "The process and procedures for review will be detailed in the subgrant application." (pp. e24-e25)
2. The methods outlined for disseminating information were exclusively on-line resources. Persons without access to computers and/or internet may be excluded from accessing this information.

Reader's Score: 2

Quality of the State subgrant competition - Quality of the State subgrant competition

1. In determining the quality of the applicant's proposed SRCL subgrant competition, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 15

Sub Question

1. The extent to which the SEA will run a rigorous, high-quality competition for subgrants, including how it will review and judge:
 - a) The LEA's or early childhood education provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal.

Sub Question

Strengths:

Strengths

B(i)(a)

1. Schools eligible to apply for subgrants will be notified through email and a posting of the requirements (including a rubric) will be uploaded to the WDPI website for them to access. (p. e32)
2. Applicants for subgrants must present a detailed plan that includes how they will meet the requirements established by the SEA to ensure that their plan is aligned to the absolute priorities of the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant Program.
3. Grant awardees will be required to form three teams: a district leadership team, an elementary-level leadership team, and a secondary-level leadership team to ensure that they are able to successfully implement the activities outlined in their proposals. (pp. e37-e38)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(i)(a)

1. A draft of the rubric that will be used to select LEAs and early childhood providers for grant funding would have been beneficial.
2. Requirements for mandatory teams (as designated for LEAs) for early childhood providers are absent. (pp. e37-e38)

Reader's Score: 1.5

2. (b) **The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant has proposed a comprehensive high-quality literacy program that meets all of the requirements set out in paragraph (d) of the Additional Requirements section in the NIA and that:**
 - (1) **Addresses the needs of disadvantaged students and proposes to implement activities in schools and early learning programs with the highest levels of need and capacity for improvement.**
 - (2) **Is informed by a needs assessment described in the application and is designed to support effective teaching and to improve student achievement of struggling readers.**
 - (3) **Involves other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students.**

Strengths:

Strengths

B(i)(b)

1. Proposed literacy plans must be researched-based and include an instructional design with specific supports for limited English proficient students and students with disabilities. (p. e34)
2. The SEA presented a chart of essential activities that displayed the coordination of literacy efforts that LEAs and early childhood providers must implement if awarded a subgrant. e39-e45)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(i)(b)

1. The applicant did not specify that subgrant applications should address the needs of students of ethnic minorities who are underperforming. (p. e34) Since comparisons of the achievement gap among various ethnic groups (pp. e5-e10) were outlined, the reader expected that the applicant would require the subgrantees to address the needs of these students.
2. The SEA did not stipulate that applicants must administer a needs assessment to support teaching and learning.

Sub Question

3. The SEA's chart of essential activities that displayed how agency involvement in the implementation of literacy practices did not include parents. (pp. e39-e45)

Reader's Score: 5.5

3. (c) **The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant demonstrates that it will implement a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction that aligns activities under the SRCL subgrant with literacy instruction supported with other Federal funds, including with funds the entity receives under Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the ESEA and, as appropriate, the Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and State and local funds.**

Strengths:

Strengths

B(i)(c)

1. The applicant stated that federal and state funding sources would be integrated with the grant to support literacy instruction as a component of the subgrant application process. (p. e49)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(i)(c)

1. The applicant did not describe specifically how funds from current federal and state funds would be integrated with the grant to support literacy instruction. (p. e49)

Reader's Score: 1

4. **The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education that propose to serve high-poverty schools or a high-poverty population, based on a definition of poverty and process for applying the priority provided by the State.**

Strengths:

Strengths

B(ii)

The SEA will give priority to high-poverty schools and centers or those that serve a high-poverty populations by instituting the following:

1. The SEA will only accept subgrant applications from schools and centers that (1) serve students with low socioeconomic status and (2) demonstrate that they are "most in need of improvement in reading and writing." (p. e32)
2. Subgrant applications must provide an explanation for: the "selection of participants" (p. e32), literacy achievement data, demographic information, and current literacy programming. (p. e32)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(ii)

1. The SEA did not elaborate on how they would give priority to schools and centers that served high-poverty populations based on a definition of poverty. (p. e32)
2. The SEA did not identify the state-selected priorities that will be used in scoring applications.

Sub Question

Reader's Score: 4

5. The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education whose applications are supported by the strongest available evidence.

Strengths:

Strengths

B(iii)

1. The applicant provided a list of criteria that subgrant applicants must include in their plans. Subgrant applicants' plans must include: (1) an instructional design with supports for ELLs and SWDs; (2) strategies to enhance early learning partnerships to strengthen the transition to the school environment; (3) a "strong" professional development component for literacy educators and content area teachers", and (4) details of how the LEA will measure "their outcomes against standard performance measures." (p. e34)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(iii)

1. The applicant did not provide the evidence that will be used to prioritize grant award recipients. Whether or not scores on the evaluation rubric that the SEA will provide to each LEA will be the only determining factor was not explained. (p. e32)

Reader's Score: 3

6. The extent to which the SEA will develop or update a process, or use an existing process, to review and judge the evidence base and alignment with State standards for the curricula and materials that LEAs propose to use in implementing their subgrants, and how the SEA will make the process and results of any such review publicly available.

Strengths:

Strengths

No strengths were noted.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

B(iv)

1. The extent that the SEA will develop or update a process to judge the evidence of alignment with state standards was not presented.

Reader's Score: 0

Project management - Project management

1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the quality of the project management plan: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 12

Sub Question

1. (i) **The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

Strengths:

Strengths

C(i)

1. The SEA identified the responsibilities, timelines, and milestones that the LEAs and early childhood providers had to provide to be considered for a subgrant. (p. e39-e45)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

C(i)

1. A line item budget was not included anywhere in the proposal.

Reader's Score: 4

2. (ii) **The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key personnel.**

Strengths:

Strengths

C(ii)

1. The governor and state superintendent were included as key personnel who are qualified to oversee the grant awards to LEAs and early childhood providers. (p. e49)
2. The vitas of the key personnel, who are qualified to oversee the grant awards to LEAs and early childhood providers, were included as Appendix D.
3. The Assistant State Superintendent, who is qualified to oversee the grant awards to LEAs and early childhood providers, will lead the project management team. (p. e49)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

C(ii)

1. Resumes were included for key personnel, but their responsibilities were not outlined. (Appendix D) (Points were not deducted because this statement is a suggestion.)

Reader's Score: 5

3. (iii) **The extent to which the State will ensure a diversity of perspectives in the design and implementation of the proposed project, including those of: families, teachers, early childhood education professionals, officials from other State and local agencies, Head Start Advisory Councils, professional organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and libraries.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

Strengths

C(iii)

1. The SEA has created an Essential Activities chart (pp. e39-e45) to ensure that LEAs and early childhood providers incorporated a variety of stakeholders.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

C(iii)

1. The Essential Activities chart (pp. e39-e45) did not define the SEA's responsibility in ensuring that LEAs and early childhood providers incorporate a variety of perspectives, including families, in the plan.

Reader's Score: 3

Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources

1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 6

Sub Question

1. (i) The extent to which the costs described in the SEA's budget are reasonable in relation to the number of objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project .

Strengths:

Strengths

D(i)

1. The costs outlined in the budget narrative (this was not labeled, but appeared in the section with other attachments) appear to coincide with planned activities for Year 1.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(i)

1. The budget narrative outlines the costs for Year 1; however program activities are described for five (5) years of the grant. (pp. e39-e45)

Reader's Score: 5

Sub Question

2. (ii) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that SRCL subgrant funds are allocated as follows:
- * At least 15 percent to serve children from birth through age five.
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in kindergarten through grade five.
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in middle and high school, through grade 12, including an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools.

Strengths:

Strengths

No strengths were noted.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(ii)

1. The percentage of funds allocated to each group of students (birth through age 5, kindergarten through grade 5, middle and high school) was not addressed in any section of the application.

Reader's Score: 0

3. (iii) The extent to which the SEA will use the grant to leverage other State and Federal funds in order to maximize the impact of the grant and how it will support LEAs and early childhood education providers in integrating funds with other local, State, and Federal funds and in developing a plan for sustaining funding after the end of the subgrant.

Strengths:

Strengths

No strengths were noted.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(iii)

1. The extent to which the SEA will use the grant to leverage other federal and state funds and how schools and centers will be supported to implement programs at the end of funding was not discussed.

Reader's Score: 0

4. (iv) The extent to which the SEA will award SRCL subgrants of sufficient size to support projects that improve instruction for a significant number of students in the high-need schools or early learning programs serving children birth through five that the SRCL subgrantee would serve.

Strengths:

Strengths

1. The applicant stated that the awards will be reserved for Title I-eligible schools and centers to improve pre-literacy skills, reading, and writing. (p. e1-Abstract)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

D(iv)

1. The extent to which the SEA will use specific criteria to ensure that funding is sufficient for high

Sub Question

priority and high needs schools and centers serving children birth through five was not addressed.

Reader's Score: 1

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must (1) propose to use technology--which may include technology to support principles of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA)--to address student learning challenges; and (2) provide, in its application, an evidence-based (as defined in the NIA) rationale that its proposed technology program, practice, or strategy will increase student engagement and achievement or increase teacher effectiveness.

Background: The effective use of technology is a critical tool for improving learning outcomes and providing teachers with high-quality professional development. Use of concepts, ideas, programming techniques, and computer-assisted text displays that give access to the text for students who cannot access traditional print, including limited-English-proficient children and students with disabilities, is a basic tenet of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA) and can help improve students' literacy and language development and identify and address student learning challenges.

Strengths:

Strengths

1. New data collection and analysis tools will be created in order to assist teachers with data-based decision making. (p. e17)
2. Currently, the state is piloting the student intervention monitoring systems (SIMS) created and designed by teachers to track student progress. (p. e17)
3. A new state-wide, on-line data warehouse is being used for data management, analysis, and public reporting. (p. e17)
4. The state's governor has allotted funds in the state budget for a statewide student information system that would centralize student information. (p. e17)
5. The state uses Model Academic Standards for Information and Technology Literacy to integrate technology in all content area instruction at all grade levels. This is supported by media specialists. (pp. e18-e19)
6. LEAs' technology plans must be included as a component of the subgrant application. (p. e39)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

1. A plan for purchasing/using assistive technology was not included in technological resources that would either be purchased or used during the implementation of the plan.

Reader's Score: 4.5

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

1. To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to improve school readiness and success through grade 12 in the area of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students.

Background: Improving the language and literacy development of disadvantaged students is essential to improving academic achievement for these students in all content areas. The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show disproportionately large numbers of disadvantaged students struggle with developing the necessary pre-literacy and literacy skills needed

to read, comprehend, and use language effectively. This results in persistent gaps in academic achievement through the elementary and secondary school years and in high school graduation rates, and presents civic and economic difficulties for these students later in life. Meeting the language and literacy needs of disadvantaged students, including limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities, is a particular focus of the SRCL program.

Strengths:

Strengths

The SEA MET the requirements for improving learning outcomes based on the following:

1. Wisconsin has a variety of initiatives for improving literacy instruction for students in the state. (pp. e25-e27)
2. The corrective action requirements mandated for Milwaukee Public Schools stipulates that this district must develop a comprehensive literacy plan with a design that support LEP students and students with disabilities. (p. e26)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

1. The state initiatives listed do not specifically address improving language and literacy attainment and closing achievement gaps of disadvantaged students from birth to grade 12. (pp. e25-e27)
2. Language and literacy "corrective action" requirements for LEP students and SWDs are only mandated for one LEA (Milwaukee Public Schools) according to the application; however, all LEAs and early childhood providers should receive corrective action if they receive funding from SRCL grants. (p. e26)

Reader's Score: 0

Absolute Priority 2 - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making

1. **To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to collect, analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, especially on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in the NIA), to improve instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in early learning settings and in elementary and secondary schools.**

Background: Accurate, timely, relevant, and appropriate data, and the effective use of that data for informed decision-making, are essential to the continuous improvement of children's literacy and language development. In developing comprehensive literacy plans and programs, it is important for States to consider strategies that provide educators, as well as families and other key stakeholders, with the data they need and the capacity and training to use those data to improve school readiness, respond to the learning and academic needs of students, improve educator effectiveness, inform professional development practices and approaches, and make informed decisions that increase student pre-literacy, literacy, and language development.

Strengths:

The SEA MET the requirements needed to ensure that they collect, analyze, and use high-quality data in elementary and secondary schools:

Strengths

1. New data collection and analysis tools will be created in order to assist teachers with data-based decision making. (p. e17)

2. Currently, the state is piloting the student intervention monitoring systems (SIMS) created and designed by teachers to track student progress. (p. e17)
3. Professional learning for SIMS will be offered. (p. e29)
4. A new state, on-line data warehouse is being used for data management, analysis, and public reporting. (p. e17)
5. Data retreats will be used by schools and districts to examine their assessment data and create school improvement plans. (p. e29)
6. Technical assistance will be provided to LEAs on the use and development of media-based tools for literacy instruction, data use, and information sharing. (p. e29)
7. A system for tracking performance of students from birth through kindergarten and into postsecondary education is a proposed state activity. (p. e29)

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

1. Data collection and analysis processes were omitted for students birth to age 3 in the data-based decision making section of the application. (p. e29)
2. None of the SEA's current practices for data-driven decision making specified that language and literacy would be a focal area. (p. e29)
3. Only one of four proposed state activities that addressed Absolute Priority 2 specified language and literacy instruction. (p. e29)

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted
Last Updated: 6/24/11 12:00 AM

Status: Submitted

Last Updated: 6/24/11 12:00 AM

Technical Review Coversheet

Applicant: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S371C110040)

Reader #3: *****

	Points Possible	Points Scored
Questions		
Quality of State-level activities		
Quality of State-level activities		
1. State-level activities	37	25
Sub Total	37	25
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
Quality of the State subgrant competition		
1. State subgrant comp	28	18
Sub Total	28	18
Project management		
Project management		
1. Project management	15	11.5
Sub Total	15	11.5
Adequacy of resources		
Adequacy of resources		
1. Adequacy of resources	20	7
Sub Total	20	7
Priority Questions		
Competitive Priority		
Effective Use of Technology		
1. Competitive Priority	5	3.5
Sub Total	5	3.5
Absolute Priority 1		
Improving Learning Outcomes		
1. Absolute Priority 1	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Absolute Priority 2		
Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making		
1. Absolute Priority 2	0	0
Sub Total	0	0
Total	105	65.0

Technical Review Form

Panel #7 - SRCL - 7: 84.371C

Reader #3: *****

Applicant: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (S371C110040)

Questions

Quality of State-level activities - Quality of State-level activities

1. In determining the quality of State-level activities, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria

Reader's Score: 25

Sub Question

1. How the SEA will carry out the required State-level activities (described in the Additional Requirements section of the NIA) and how it will align those activities with its comprehensive State literacy plan.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant describes that the population in need of support has high rates of mobility and suspensions which put them at-risk for reading failure (p. 22). This is a strength because the funds from the grant can assist in supporting the literacy skills of these individuals. Additionally, funds can assist in the development of a state-wide tracking system which can be used to stay informed about transient students. The applicant also provides a detailed description of their goals and priorities for the project including those which address outcomes for young children (e. g. wrap-around services), reading in Kindergarten through grade 3, development of assessments, and providing training and technical assistance (p. 25-29). Finally, the applicant successfully describes how programs such as Rtl, and Race To The Top programs align with the aims of the grant (p. 47). This is a strength because there is a clear picture of how literacy skills can be supported in conjunction with current programs that support literacy.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant discusses clear instructional goals for subgroups but it is not clear how those goals will be measured (p. 25). Specifically, the applicant states that they will disseminate standards but does not describe how this goal will be accomplished.

Reader's Score: 7

2. The SEA's goals for improving student literacy outcomes throughout the State for all students (e.g., limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities), including a description of the data (which may include data gathered through a needs assessment) that the SEA has considered or will consider and a clear and credible path that the SEA will take to achieve these goals with the support of its LEAs.

Sub Question

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant describes current National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and Wisconsin Student Assessment System (WSAS) to demonstrate a significant achievement gap between white students and minority populations. Additionally, a goal of cutting the gap in half is stated (p. 6 and p. 10). These are strength because the specific populations targeted for improvement are noted.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant provides minimal detail when describing a clear and credible path for changing reading outcomes for students, especially those targeted in the needs assessment including transient populations and minorities (p. 25-29).

Reader's Score: 5

- 3. How the SEA will provide technical assistance and support to its SRCL subgrantees (and, at its discretion, to other LEAs or early childhood education providers) to enable them to implement a high-quality comprehensive literacy program and to improve student achievement in core academic subjects.**

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant describes collaboration at a state level to ensure that they align the state government, schools, and community agencies effectively (p. 14). This is a strength since collaboration may enhance communication and strengthen the ability of subgrantees to deliver high quality literacy programs. The applicant also states they will provide technical assistance to increase the quality of early childhood curricula (p. 15) and states reasonable learning outcomes (p. 25-27). This supports efforts to deliver a high quality program since goals are attainable. Finally, the applicant effectively describes the roles of literacy leaders including examples such as literacy coaches and librarians which provides a clear picture of roles and responsibilities of personnel (p. 13).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

There is minimal discussion of how they will align early childhood programs with school based programs. This is a weakness since experts in the area of literacy agree that transitional services from early childhood to school are critical in supporting achievement. More information about how the early learning standards support school age reading and writing readiness would be beneficial in creating a clear picture for educators to follow when working to provide a comprehensive literacy plan (p. 15).

Reader's Score: 3.5

- 4. How the SEA will evaluate the State's progress in improving achievement in literacy for children and youth from birth through grade 12, including disadvantaged students, including: (1) whether the evaluation will be conducted by an independent evaluator (whose role in the project is limited solely to conducting the evaluation); (2) whether the evaluation will use methods that are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the objectives of the proposed project; and (3) how the SEA will use evidence to inform and continuously improve the design and implementation of its activities.**

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant describes the evaluation process, roles, and procedures in detail (p. 25-27). This is a strength in understanding the feasibility of the goals. Additionally, the applicant clearly delineates the procedures for improving the design and implementation of current literacy programs.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant did not describe any targeted ways they would address the needs of disadvantaged students outside of their current RtI framework. Thus, not all children can benefit from the comprehensive literacy plan. For example, students performing as proficient readers may not be included and fall behind in literacy improvement efforts. Also, it is unclear how this program will differ from current efforts and programming (p. 27). It is not clear how the SRCL funds will be used to strengthen programs versus funding existing programs.

Reader's Score: 7

- 5. How the SEA will disseminate information on project outcomes, disaggregated by student subgroup, and in formats that are easily understood by, and accessible to, the public, and how the SEA will make that information useful to varied groups (such as families, educators, researchers, other experts, early childhood education providers, and State leaders).**

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant addresses goals for developing media based tools for data use and information sharing which demonstrates that many groups will be able to access information (p. 29). Furthermore, there is a reference to a longitudinal data system for tracking students throughout their educational journeys, which may assist with tracking the transient population described (p. 29). This will likely increase instructional time and communication when children switch schools.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

There is no description about how the data will be used to inform practice at the school level (p. 25-29). This is a noted weakness since the dissemination of data may not be useful without a plan for evaluating instruction.

Reader's Score: 2.5

Quality of the State subgrant competition - Quality of the State subgrant competition

- 1. In determining the quality of the applicant's proposed SRCL subgrant competition, the Secretary considers: See Sub-Criteria**

Reader's Score: 18

Sub Question

- 1. The extent to which the SEA will run a rigorous, high-quality competition for subgrants, including how it will review and judge:**
a) The LEA's or early childhood education provider's capacity to successfully implement its proposal.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant provides a clear plan for evaluating grantees potential for successful implementation and access to data monitoring tools to support their efforts. They also plan to require vitas, regular meetings,

Sub Question

and evaluation methods including a scoring rubric (p. 31). This is a strength since the applicant offers a clear plan for delivering a high quality competition.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

No major weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 3

2. (b) **The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant has proposed a comprehensive high-quality literacy program that meets all of the requirements set out in paragraph (d) of the Additional Requirements section in the NIA and that:**

(1) **Addresses the needs of disadvantaged students and proposes to implement activities in schools and early learning programs with the highest levels of need and capacity for improvement.**

(2) **Is informed by a needs assessment described in the application and is designed to support effective teaching and to improve student achievement of struggling readers.**

(3) **Involves other agencies, nonprofit organizations, community-based organizations, and families in activities that promote the implementation of effective literacy instruction for disadvantaged students.**

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant describes how they will develop stronger standards, assessment tools, and improved data collection tools in efforts to better support disadvantaged students (p. 17). Thus, high-need students are addressed. The data supports the applicants' need for literacy supports and effectively involves other agencies to support literacy outcomes for students birth through grade 12

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The proposal discusses the adoption of common core state standards of language arts and math as well as a major push for an RtI model. The applicant does not make it clear how the literacy goals can be implemented in conjunction with these programs and support students during the transition period when schools start delivering the common core standards (p.17).

Reader's Score: 4

3. (c) **The extent to which each SRCL subgrant applicant demonstrates that it will implement a coherent strategy to improve literacy instruction that aligns activities under the SRCL subgrant with literacy instruction supported with other Federal funds, including with funds the entity receives under Title I, Title II-A, and Title III of the ESEA and, as appropriate, the Head Start Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, and State and local funds.**

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant requirements for grantees include the provision of supports for teachers during the transition to Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and data driven decision making for birth through grade 12 (p. 33).

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The comprehensive literacy plan will be created in year one which may limit implementation opportunities for year one (p. 34). Additionally, the applicant did not discuss fund alignment in their application which weakens the strength of the quality of the literacy plan.

Reader's Score: 1

- 4. The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education that propose to serve high-poverty schools or a high-poverty population, based on a definition of poverty and process for applying the priority provided by the State.**

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant states that Title I and early childhood community agencies will gain priority due to a high need for reducing the achievement gap (p. 5 and 34). This data strengthens the application by addressing the neediest populations.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 6

- 5. The extent to which the SEA will give priority to LEAs or providers of early childhood education whose applications are supported by the strongest available evidence.**

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant states that funding is meant to improve instruction and assessment in early grades as well as support transitions from community programs by modeling an RtI model (p. 35). This is a strength because the applicant gives priority to subgrantees who the funds are intended to serve.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 4

- 6. The extent to which the SEA will develop or update a process, or use an existing process, to review and judge the evidence base and alignment with State standards for the curricula and materials that LEAs propose to use in implementing their subgrants, and how the SEA will make the process and results of any such review publicly available.**

Strengths:

Strengths

No strengths noted.

Sub Question

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant does not address alignment with the state standards (p. 39). Without this component, applicants may not be judged on this evidence, which weakens the application.

Reader's Score: 0

Project management - Project management

- 1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the quality of the project management plan: See Sub-Criteria**

Reader's Score: 11.5

Sub Question

- 1. (i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.**

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant provides a clear plan which outlines goals and persons responsible for implementing the activities and goals. There is also a timeline included (p. 39-45). This is a strength since the applicant offers details about roles and responsibilities of personnel and offers a reasonable timeline for accomplishing goals.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

There is a lot of development taking place in years 1 and 2, which lessens opportunities for re-evaluating the plan and goals for better implementation (p. 39).

Reader's Score: 3.5

- 2. (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key personnel.**

Strengths:

Strengths

Vitas for key personnel are provided and partners are effectively described (p. 47). Specifically, experts in policy, research, technology, and literacy are included in the application.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

No weaknesses noted.

Reader's Score: 5

- 3. (iii) The extent to which the State will ensure a diversity of perspectives in the design and**

Sub Question

implementation of the proposed project, including those of: families, teachers, early childhood education professionals, officials from other State and local agencies, Head Start Advisory Councils, professional organizations, institutions of higher education, community-based organizations, and libraries.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant describes the Read to Lead Task Force as a mechanism for gaining diverse partners from across the reading spectrum (p. 49). This is a strength since a goal of SRCL is to build a diverse group from which to draw supports and leadership from.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant does not mention obtaining input from families (p. 13 and 39). This is a weakness since families are an integral part of literacy development, especially in the early years.

Reader's Score: 3

Adequacy of resources - Adequacy of resources

- 1. The Secretary considers the following factors in determining the adequacy of resources for the proposed project: See Sub-Criteria**

Reader's Score: 7

Sub Question

- 1. (i) The extent to which the costs described in the SEA's budget are reasonable in relation to the number of objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project .**

Strengths:

Strengths

The resources for contractual work seem reasonable for the goals (Budget). Specifically, the budget addresses how SEAs will leverage state and federal funds to support the objectives of the comprehensive literacy plan. Additionally, the objectives and goals are in alignment with the comprehensive literacy plan and the costs described seem adequate to support attainment of those goals.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The personnel budget shows extensive development work required in years 1 and 2, and the allocation of funds does not seem reasonable for the amount of work required. Also, the costs described for the external evaluator were quite high when considering funding distributions (Budget). Specifically, \$74,075,595 is allotted for contractual work (Budget).

Reader's Score: 5

- 2. (ii) The quality of the SEA's plan to ensure that SRCL subgrant funds are allocated as follows:**
 - * At least 15 percent to serve children from birth through age five.**
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in kindergarten through grade five.**
 - * At least 40 percent to serve students in middle and high school, through grade 12, including an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools.**

Sub Question

Strengths:

Strengths
No strengths noted.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses
The allocation of funds to the above categories was not described in the application.

Reader's Score: 0

3. (iii) **The extent to which the SEA will use the grant to leverage other State and Federal funds in order to maximize the impact of the grant and how it will support LEAs and early childhood education providers in integrating funds with other local, State, and Federal funds and in developing a plan for sustaining funding after the end of the subgrant.**

Strengths:

Strengths
No strengths noted

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses
The applicant does not address that the SEA will support LEAs by integrating funds from other sources and utilizing other programs such as RTI to support programming.

Reader's Score: 0

4. (iv) **The extent to which the SEA will award SRCL subgrants of sufficient size to support projects that improve instruction for a significant number of students in the high-need schools or early learning programs serving children birth through five that the SRCL subgrantee would serve.**

Strengths:

Strengths
The size of the subgrants appears sufficient to complete goals suggested in the current proposal (p. 5-6). Applicants must serve Title 1 and children from poverty, early childhood, and community programs (p. 1). The applicant effectively addresses how funds will be allocated to these populations and offers reasonably sized grants for subgrants when looking at the goals and objectives for the state.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses
The breakdown of funds is unclear in some sections of the grant (e.g., assistive technology was not included) (Budget). Since the plan addresses the use of technology in the narrative, this information is needed in the budget.

Reader's Score: 2

Priority Questions

Competitive Priority - Effective Use of Technology

1. To meet this priority, an applicant must (1) propose to use technology--which may include technology to support principles of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA)--to address student learning challenges; and (2) provide, in its application, an evidence-based (as defined in the NIA) rationale that its proposed technology program, practice, or strategy will increase student engagement and achievement or increase teacher effectiveness.

Background: The effective use of technology is a critical tool for improving learning outcomes and providing teachers with high-quality professional development. Use of concepts, ideas, programming techniques, and computer-assisted text displays that give access to the text for students who cannot access traditional print, including limited-English-proficient children and students with disabilities, is a basic tenet of universal design for learning (as defined in the NIA) and can help improve students' literacy and language development and identify and address student learning challenges.

Strengths:

Strengths

The applicant discussed a plan to provide "training and technical assistance" to increase quality of their early childhood curriculum (p. 15). The applicant also describes effective technology integration (p. 18) and the use of assistive technology to support those struggling in the area of literacy. This is a strength since the inclusion of technology may offer greater access for subgrantees and students.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

The applicant refers to Universal Design for Learning in the narrative, however, no technology support plan was included (p. 15). This is a weakness since effective technology use requires effective implementation and support services to be effective for professional development and instruction.

Reader's Score: 3.5

Absolute Priority 1 - Improving Learning Outcomes

1. To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to improve school readiness and success through grade 12 in the area of language and literacy development for disadvantaged students.

Background: Improving the language and literacy development of disadvantaged students is essential to improving academic achievement for these students in all content areas. The 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results show disproportionately large numbers of disadvantaged students struggle with developing the necessary pre-literacy and literacy skills needed to read, comprehend, and use language effectively. This results in persistent gaps in academic achievement through the elementary and secondary school years and in high school graduation rates, and presents civic and economic difficulties for these students later in life. Meeting the language and literacy needs of disadvantaged students, including limited-English-proficient students and students with disabilities, is a particular focus of the SRCL program.

Strengths:

Strengths

This priority was MET. The applicant provides detailed descriptions of goals and priorities to address the goals and outcomes they identified as priorities (p. 25-29). Since the priorities address the development of disadvantaged students and the promotion of literacy skills, this priority is met. Additionally, the applicant addresses efforts to decrease the achievement gap.

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

Some of the grant requirements were identified in bullets on page 23, although the information was vague and did not provide specific ways to improve education in low income students (p. 25).

Reader's Score: 0

Absolute Priority 2 - Enabling More Data-Based Decision-Making

1. To meet this priority: An applicant must propose a project that is designed to collect, analyze, and use high-quality and timely data, especially on program participant outcomes, in accordance with privacy requirements (as defined in the NIA), to improve instructional practices, policies, and student outcomes in early learning settings and in elementary and secondary schools.

Background: Accurate, timely, relevant, and appropriate data, and the effective use of that data for informed decision-making, are essential to the continuous improvement of children's literacy and language development. In developing comprehensive literacy plans and programs, it is important for States to consider strategies that provide educators, as well as families and other key stakeholders, with the data they need and the capacity and training to use those data to improve school readiness, respond to the learning and academic needs of students, improve educator effectiveness, inform professional development practices and approaches, and make informed decisions that increase student pre-literacy, literacy, and language development.

Strengths:

Strengths

1. This priority was MET. The applicant describes an effort for Measuring Academic Promise (MAP) using summative assessment to facilitate academic progress (p. 3).

Weaknesses:

Weaknesses

1. Current data suggests decreases in performance in grades 3 through 8, which indicates current uses of data may not be effectively informing practice (p. 7-8).

Reader's Score: 0

Status: Submitted

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